

## THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

Report of the Congressional Committee  
on the Operations of the Army  
of the Potomac.

## USES OF ITS INACTION AND ILL SUCCESS

### ITS SEVERAL CAMPAIGNS.

### WHY McCLELLAN WAS REMOVED.

### THE BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG.

### REMOVAL OF BURNside.

### ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

Mr. Wade, from the Joint Committee on the conduct of the War, submitted the following report, with the accompanying testimony:

#### REPORT OF THE WAR.

In December, 1861, a joint committee of the two houses of Congress, consisting of three members of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives, was appointed, with instructions to inquire into the conduct of the present war.

The Committee proceeded to the discharge of the duty devolved upon them, and have labored zealously, and with great trust, faithfully, for that purpose.

As evidence of it, they would refer to the large mass of testimony taken by them, upon many subjects, and herewith reported.

The subject of inquiry referred to them was one of the utmost importance and magnitude. Upon "the conduct of the present war" depended the issue of the experiment inaugurated by our fathers, after so much expenditure of blood and treasure, the establishment of a nation founded upon the capacity of man for self-government.

The nation was engaged in a contest for its very existence; a rebellion, unparalleled in history, threatened the overthrow of our free institutions, and the most prompt and vigorous measures were demanded by every consideration of honor, patriotism, and a due regard for the prosperity and happiness of the people.

Your Committee could perceive no necessity for recommending any particular legislation to Congress. Its previous course showed that no such recommendation was required.

When Congress met the preceding July, fresh from the people—called together to provide for the safety of the Government and the maintenance of the national honor and existence—the representatives of the various States for the raising of those regiments which would enable them to depart for the fields of duty assigned to them. No consideration was given to the head of the Government, in this the most critical period of the nation's history, was more promptly and fully satisfied than that of any other Government of which history has preserved any record.

The call of the President for money and men had been more than complied with; no legislation which he had deemed necessary had been denied by Congress, and the people had most nobly and generously supported and sustained what their representatives had promised in their name. The same Congress, fresh from their constituents, had again met, and there could be no doubt that, as they had before acted, so would they continue to act. It needs but to refer to the history of the Congress just closed, its prompt and thorough action, clothing the Executive with the fullest power, placing at his disposal all the resources of men and money which this nation possessed, to prove that your Committee judged rightly that Congress needed no prompting from them to do its entire duty.

Not upon those whose duty it was to provide the means necessary to put down the Rebellion, but upon those whose duty it was to rightfully apply those means, and the agents they employed for that purpose, rested the blame, if any, that the hopes of the nation have not been realized, and its expectations have so long been disappointed.

Your Committee therefore concluded that they would best perform their duty by endeavoring to obtain such information in respect to the conduct of the war as would best enable them to advise what mistakes had been made in the past, and the proper course to be pursued in the future; to obtain such information as the many and laborious duties of the President, and his Cabinet prevented them from acquiring, and to lay it before them with such recommendations and suggestions as seemed to be most imperatively demanded; and the journal of the proceedings of your Committee shows that, for a long time, they were in constant communication with the President and his Cabinet, and neglected no opportunity of at once laying before them the information required by them in the course of their investigations.

Many specific subjects of investigation presented themselves for the consideration of your Committee, any one of which might well require the action of a committee for itself; and all of which, if fully investigated, would demand the attention of all the representatives in Congress. It was apparent from the first that your Committee would be compelled to confine their attention to a few of the more prominent subjects of inquiry; to those the investigation of which would best enable them to comprehend the causes and necessity, if any, for the delay and inaction characterizing the operations of our armies in the field.

And while each of those subjects has received from them the attention which its importance merited, so far as they were able to give it, the attention of your Committee has been turned more particularly to the history of the Army of the Potomac. In the history of that army is to be found all that is necessary to enable your Committee to report upon "the conduct of one war." Had that army fulfilled all that a generous and confiding people were justified in expecting from it, this rebellion had long since been crushed, and the blessings of peace restored to this nation. The failure of that army to fulfill those expectations has prolonged this contest to the present time, with all its expenditure of life and treasure, for it has to a great extent neutralized, if not entirely destroyed, the legitimate fruits which would otherwise have been reaped from our glorious victories in the West.

Therefore, while your Committee have not failed to take the testimony of witnesses in relation to military operations in other parts of the country, and also upon various subjects to which their attention has been specially directed by Congress and the War Department, since the Committee was first appointed, the principal part of the testimony taken by them relates to the Army of the Potomac and some subjects more immediately connected with its operations. They have taken the testimony of nearly 200 witnesses, almost entirely men in the military service of the Government, including about 100 generals.

The disaster at Bull Run in July, 1861, was fully investigated by your Committee, as being the first conflict of the national troops with armed treason upon the field of battle; and also because the troops there engaged formed the nucleus around which has been collected the vast and magnificent Army of the Potomac. The result of their investigation is submitted in a separate report.

Your Committee have also investigated the disaster at Ball's Bluff, that battle being the first conflict of any extent in which any of the troops of the army of the Potomac were engaged after its reorganization. A separate report of that disaster is also submitted.

Immediately upon the organization of your Committee, and before proceeding to the taking of any testimony, they addressed to Gen. McClellan, who, by the retirement of Gen. Scott, had become General-in-Chief of the Army, the following communication:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 21, 1861.  
Sir: You are aware that a Joint Committee has been appointed by the Senate and House of Representatives to inquire into the conduct of the War. This Committee, at a meeting held this morning, unanimously expressed a desire, before proceeding in their official duties, to have an interview with you at your office, at such time as may suit your convenience, in view of your present engagements."

"My dear Sir: You and I have been much and different persons to each other, and I have always been anxious to make up the difference between us. I have now, however, no time to spare, and I must leave Washington at once. I will, however, be at your office at 10 A.M. to-morrow morning, and you will be at mine at 10 A.M. to-morrow morning. I will then be at your office at 1 P.M. to-morrow afternoon, and you will be at mine at 1 P.M. to-morrow afternoon. I will then be at your office at 2 P.M. to-morrow afternoon, and you will be at mine at 2 P.M. to-morrow afternoon. I will then be at your office at 3 P.M. to-morrow afternoon, and you will be at mine at 3 P.M. to-morrow afternoon. I will then be at your office at 4 P.M. to-morrow afternoon, and you will be at mine at 4 P.M. to-morrow afternoon. I will then be at your office at 5 P.M. to-morrow afternoon, and you will be at mine at 5 P.M. to-morrow afternoon. 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